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REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE

Secretary of State for Foreign Relations

BY ✓

EDUARDO BÉECHE

Ex-CONSUL GENERAL OF COSTA RICA IN NICARAGUA

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PRECEDED BY

SOME NOTES REGARDING THE PRESENT STATUS OF
THE RELATIONS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES



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It has been stated in some of the organs of the press of the United States that the present difficulties between Costa Rica and Nicaragua originated in the old boundary question ; this is incorrect, at least so far as Costa Rica is concerned.

The essential point of the boundary controversy—the validity of the boundary treaty—was settled by the award of President Cleveland, of March 22, 1888, sustaining the contention of Costa Rica. The delays which have subsequently prevented the material demarcation of the divisional line are not attributable to Costa Rica which had exerted every effort to bring about that desired end ; and when the surveying work was once begun, she accepted without question the decisions of the engineer arbitrator named by the President of the United States, pursuant to the Convention signed to that end in El Salvador, through the fraternal mediation of the Government of that State, on March 27, 1896.

The true causes of the present difficulties are made apparent in the correspondence published by the Government of Costa Rica on September 14 and December 19, 1897. From these documents it appears that troops of the Government of Nicaragua invaded Costa Rican territory, passing four miles within the boundary line ; it appears that persons very intimately connected with the Government of Nicaragua took great pains to arouse public feeling against Costa Rica, under the groundless pretext that a decree permitting the free importation of certain commodities, violated its rights ; it appears that with the same end in view it was asserted in Nicaragua that the Costa Rican Boundary Commission pretended to re-incorporate into Costa Rica the Nicaraguan port of San Juan del Norte ; it appears that the Government of General Zelaya affected to give credit, in order to formulate a charge of disloyalty against the chief magistrate of Costa Rica, to an apocryphal letter the origin of which was not unknown to the Nicaraguan Ruler ; and it appears, finally, that Don Eduardo Béche, Consul General of Costa Rica in Nicaragua, was not permitted to

officially explain the spirit of the decree mentioned, nor disprove the gross calumny cast upon President Yglesias; and that eventually Señor Béeche, the Consul General, was thrown into prison before his *exequatur* was cancelled, and under the pretext, still unjustified, that he was involved in a revolutionary movement.

The Government of Nicaragua still not content with these provocations aimed at that of Costa Rica, threatens the latter from the frontier, placing forces there which appear to be ready to invade the country.

This pamphlet contains the report presented to the Secretary of State for Foreign Relations of Costa Rica by the said Señor Béeche. In this document that citizen completely exonerates himself of the charge which the Government of General Zelaya lodged against him, and rehearses the outrages of which he was the victim in Nicaragua.

The Government of Costa Rica, in the meanwhile, has displayed the greatest prudence and moderation, in order to avoid a conflict, which course it believes best becomes sister peoples; but at the same time that it exhausts all the expedients of civilization in behalf of peace, it has requested the Diet of the Greater Republic that, inspired with the high sentiments of justice, it make proper reparation for the outrage inflicted on Costa Rica in the person of Señor Béeche, and equitably indemnify the latter for the injuries occasioned him.

The Diet in reply evades all answer to the claims of Costa Rica, and limits itself to contending that Governments have the right to cancel the credentials of a Consul who is *persona non grata*—a question which the Costa Rica Government has not and could not bring into the discussion. Neither does the Diet adduce any proof to justify the imprisonment of the Consul, Señor Béeche; but beyond that evasion and this silence, what claims particular attention is the circumstance that the Diet in its reply, written two days after the rendition of a sentence in which a court martial condemned Señor Béeche, it did not specify any of the evidence upon which the court based its findings, and failed to make any reference to the sentence. This circumstance leads to the belief that the Diet did not find

in the proceedings any evidence as to the guilt of Señor Béeche, and hence its failure to adduce the same, and its reason for carrying the question to a plane distinct from that upon which it should be discussed.

The Government of Costa Rica was preparing to insist upon the matter of the demands it had laid before the Diet, when it learned that the Nicaraguan revolutionists had risen in arms against the Government of the neighboring country ; for which reason it became necessary to suspend the prosecution of the steps taken to that end. Very soon it was learned that Nicaraguan troops were advancing towards Costa Rica, probably in pursuit of the routed revolutionists who were endeavoring to gain the frontier, and then the Costa Rican Government resolved to place a small force there with a view to preventing any new violation of its territory.

In this condition of things a telegram was received in San José in which the Diet makes bold to assert that the Government of Costa Rica had taken part in the revolutionary movement which broke out a short time before in San Juan del Sur, advancing as a proof of this charge the refusal of the Government to concentrate the Nicaraguan political exiles who had established their residence in the Province of Guanacaste.

The Government of Costa Rica considers that it was not its duty to watch or impede the movements of the Nicaraguans who had sought asylum in Guanacaste, so long as their movements did not violate the laws of the Republic ; and as regards concentrating the political exiles, as that measure was requested by the Government of Nicaragua at the very time that the Consul, Señor Béeche, was the object in Nicaragua of numberless outrages, and when the just demands of the Costa Rican Government were given deaf ears, this latter Government considers that national dignity prevented it from acceding to the request, considering the circumstances under which it was made by the Diet.

As is gleaned from the telegram referred to, the Diet asked the States signing the compact of Amapala to resolve among themselves the questions pending between Costa Rica and the Government of Nicaragua, and it is to be hoped that good

judgment will prevail in the minds of the Governments of El Salvador and Honduras, and that before they will allow themselves to be drawn into the most unjust of aggressions, they will disapprove the attitude of the Nicaraguan Ruler and emphatically repudiate his rash purposes.

The Government of Costa Rica has done on its part all that dignity and prudence counsel, (having all the right on its side), to bring the Government of General Zelaya, through the medium of the Diet which is his organ, to the friendly recognition of the justice of its complaints and the validity of its demands. Its efforts in this behalf have been unfortunately sterile.

Nevertheless, the Government of Costa Rica has declared through the *Diario Oficial* that its policy in the premises is limited solely and exclusively to providing for the defense of the fatherland in anticipation of any act that may be violative of the national sovereignty. This is its duty and it will know how to perform it.

SAN JOSÉ, February 12, 1898.

Mr. Minister:

I have the honor to lay before you a detailed statement of the events which have lately transpired in Nicaragua, the outcome of which was the imprisonment to which I was unduly subjected by the Government of that State.

On May 6, 1896, I was honored with the appointment of Consul General of Costa Rica in Nicaragua, whither I went, together with my family, early in the month of June, the customary exequatur having been issued to me on the 27th of the same month and year.

From the very start, I devoted all my energies to the promotion of the good relations which exist between the two countries, and which at the time existed between their respective Governments; and I made it known, both in my writings and in private conversations, that that was the sole and special mission entrusted to me by the Government of Señor Iglesias.

In the interest of truth I ought to state that General Zelaya received me with especial regard, and that for some time I was the object of expressive manifestations of sympathy and esteem on the part of the head of the cabinet and of all the officials of that Government.

As you may have seen in the newspapers of Nicaragua, I was publishing, so long as the press accepted my articles, information regarding Costa Rica, endeavoring to make our country known; but as the only publications now existing in Nicaragua are semi-official, when that Government began to antagonize me, the press declined to receive my contributions, and the only newspaper—El Correo de Granada—which made bold to insert my defense of Señor Iglesias and Costa Rica, was immediately suspended, and one of its publishers, Don Adán Vivas, was imprisoned.

As I have before stated, during the first months and up to January of last year, when the Legation entrusted to Dr. Jacinto Castellanos by the Greater Republic of Central America

came to Costa Rica, everything was on a good footing. President Zelaya and his ministers were ceaseless in their expressions of friendship towards Señor Iglesias and his Government, as well as towards the people of Costa Rica; and I must say with satisfaction that during this time I was not looked upon as a consul, but I was treated with all the consideration and deferences allotted to diplomatic ministers.

Desirous of making return for the many attentions received, and with the consent of this Government, I gave a banquet to General Zelaya and his Cabinet on October 23, 1896. At this feast, as at many others, there were exchanged between President Zelaya and the writer hereof expressions of cordiality which seemed to be sincere on the part of that magistrate, through which he signified his efforts to preserve good relations with the Government of Costa Rica.

Don Manuel Coronel Matus, who up to that time had shown himself favorable to this policy of conciliation and harmony, was named Secretary of the Legation presided over by Dr. Castellanos, and he was entrusted by President Zelaya upon that occasion with a special mission before President Iglesias.

The Chief Magistrate of Nicaragua was particularly anxious to obtain the signature of President Iglesias to a treaty whereby Costa Rica ceded to Nicaragua the waters of the Colorado River, the deviation of which was urged in order that they should swell the waters of the San Juan River, thereby rendering easier the steam navigation of the latter.

Information which I received there, and which I deemed trustworthy, acquainted me with the fact that the desire of President Zelaya was not crowned with the success which he had anticipated.

This was undoubtedly the cause, since no other exists, which led Señor Coronel Matus, on making a report upon the results of his mission, to express views which brought upon this country and its Government the animadversion and ill-will of General Zelaya, who from that moment ceased to give evidences of sympathy.

On February 7, 1897, that Government discovered a revolutionary plan, and some of General Zelaya's friends led him to

believe that the Government of Costa Rica had aided the conservatives of Grenada in that plan. Predisposed, as he was, against us, Señor Zelaya was so quick to believe everything told him in this regard, that on a certain occasion he addressed me as follows :

"I wish you to understand, Señor Béeche, that if from the investigations to be made it appears as a fact that your Government has interfered in the domestic affairs of Nicaragua, I will go to San José, for he who could triumphantly enter Tegucigalpa, can with greater ease enter the capital of Costa Rica ;" words which I reported, at the proper time, as was my duty, to the Department of State.

It was generally believed in that country that the award of the Engineer Alexander in the boundary matter, treating of the Punta de Castilla question, would be unfavorable to Nicaragua ; and it was the public opinion that the Government of that State was making preparations with the idea of declaring war on Costa Rica, if the award were against it.

At the proper time, I also reported this to the Department, and also, in a private letter, to the President of the Republic.

At the beginning of the month of July there appeared in the newspaper, *El Comercio*, of Managua, a forged letter of Señor Don Rafael Iglesias to General Domingo Vásquez I immediately transmitted the apocryphal letter by telegraph to Señor Iglesias, at the same time asking him what there was in it.

So soon as I had received the reply denying the authenticity of that document, I presented myself before the Minister of Interior Relations, requesting the publication in the *Diario Oficial* of the telegram of Señor Iglesias, in which he stated the spuriousness of the said letter, and requesting, at the same time, that the Minister investigate, without judicial intervention, what person had taken the forged document to the office of *El Comercio*, thus assuming responsibility for its publication.

Minister Calderón, after having conferred with President Zelaya, stated to me that the latter absolutely refused to do all I had asked, as he did not consider the satisfaction which I requested for President Iglesias as an official matter ; and with

respect to the investigation I desired, he left the courts—the only channel which could furnish me with the name of the party who had given the forged copy to *El Comercio*, a semi-official newspaper subsidized by the public treasury,—open to me.

In view of the hostile attitude of that Government, which had always shown itself so friendly to ours, I determined to make several publications in loose sheets to vindicate Señor Iglesias, which I believe I succeeded in doing; the respectable public becoming convinced some days later of the villainy which had characterized the action in the premises.

From trustworthy sources I learned later that it was President Zelaya in person who had delivered to the editor of the semi-official newspaper the apocryphal letter, and who had inspired the comments published with it. From the moment I learned this, I fully understood why I had been refused the means of clearing up this unfortunate matter, and the effect that the false document, invented and published without doubt for the purpose of arousing feeling against Costa Rica in Nicaragua as well as Honduras, might have.

The good results attendant upon my efforts to give the lie to the said letter gained for me the deepest enmity of President Zelaya and some of his intimate friends, the foremost among which was Don José Dolores Gámez, the irreconcilable enemy of Costa Rica.

I should here record with satisfaction that while these events put me in bad odor with the Government of that State, on the other hand the Nicaraguan society, which from the moment of my arrival had loaded me with ~~evil~~ intentions, showed no change, and in Managua the same as in the other cities, my family and I were received with evidences of affection and marked courtesy.

If the explanations anent the apocryphal letter occasioned me serious difficulties, no less grave were those which arose immediately afterwards by reason of the decree issued by the Congress of this country on June 12th of the previous year—a decree which permits the introduction of some articles free of duty into the territory of Costa Rica by way of the San Juan River; for efforts were made to arouse public feeling against

us, and in fact, the liberal convention, headed and directed by Señor Gámez, and aided by the Government of Nicaragua, organized public meetings to determine whether or not it were advisable to immediately declare war on Costa Rica.

On this occasion also I had to confront the Government and defend my country through sundry publications ; and I further believe that I proved by them the perfect right of our Congress to issue the decree of June 12th.

When the paper, *El Comercio*, edited by Señor Gámez, no longer could adduce reasons to combat my arguments, it descended to the plane of insults, and the columns of that paper were daily filled with personal abuse of me. Naturally, I ought not—nor would it have been becoming in me—to follow it on that level, and I opine that abstention from replying to those vituperations was the best mark of contempt for its unqualifiable conduct.

Nevertheless, success attended the efforts to excite, ever under the pretext of the said decree, feeling against the Costa Ricans, to the extent that one night, crowds urged on and made drunk by agents of the Government, began to march through the streets of Managua shouting “Death to the people and Government of Costa Rica !”

My words can not convey to you the profound indignation produced in me by such cries, uttered within the hearing of the police authorities, who remained indifferent and took no measures whatever to repress such manifestations, alike odious and unjustified.

Because of this I immediately went to the house of the Minister of Interior Relations and informed him of what was taking place, lodging a formal protest in the name of the Government of Costa Rica for the complacency with which the authorities looked upon that disturbance, and expressing my surprise at such a proceeding while friendly relations existed between the two people and Governments.

I likewise expressed to the Minister my purpose to cause, to the full extent of my ability, the name of Costa Rica to be respected while I remained in that State as Consul General of this country.

Minister Calderón expressed his displeasure at the occurrence and found my protest very proper; and he gave orders to the Chief of Police of Managua to suppress the abuses which were being committed.

The energetic and timely action of the Chief of Police was productive of the best results, for during the remainder of the night the offensive and disrespectful shouts which gave rise to my protest were not repeated.

There is no room for doubt that all these incidents, and many of less importance which I abstain from enumerating, were placing me in a very difficult position to discharge the functions of the consulate; for the Government of Nicaragua in its desire to antagonize me, eventually went so far as to prohibit the sending of my cipher dispatches over the national telegraph lines, and the Director General of these (by positive orders received from President Zelaya) refused to deliver to me a cablegram from the consulate general of Costa Rica in El Salvador.

This high-handed action, as well as all the other matters, I reported to the Department of State at the time.

Since January of last year the eldest of my little girls had been suffering with a very severe stomach trouble. Several prominent physicians of Nicaragua, who had attended her—latterly the distinguished German doctor, Ernesto Rothschild—were of the opinion that in order to secure an improvement in her condition it was necessary to seek a cooler climate than that of Managua. Following, therefore, the suggestion, about the middle of August I transferred my family to Masaya.

The occupations incident to the office I held in Managua, coupled with the business of Dr. Victorino Argüello, who on leaving for Europe had given me a general power of attorney to represent him, prevented me from accompanying my family during their stay in Masaya; but having learned on September 16th, at 2 P. M., that a revolution would break out on the following day, and fearing to leave my family alone in the hotel at Masaya at a time when a civil war was ripe, the duration and results of which I could not foresee, I determined to leave that very day for Masaya, where I joined my family.

As the party from whom I had received the news in the capital was unable to give me any details touching the revolution on foot, and as it was natural to suppose that the attack would be directed against Managua, where Señor Zelaya was, I did not wish to take my wife and children to the capital in order that they might not be on the scene of the disturbances ; and I determined, my wife agreeing, to go with them on the morning of September 17th to the city of Granada, where the Government has only a very small force, for which reason it was natural to suppose that the revolutionists would have no interest in attacking the place. It is thus apparent how far I was from knowing the smallest detail of a revolutionary plan of which I had barely a vague notice on the eve of the day it broke out.

On the very 17th two more of my children fell ill, and this circumstance prevented me from returning to the capital, as I had desired. At night, and contrary to my surmise, the revolutionists made an attack on the Granada barracks, and on the following day, although I wished to return to Managua, it was no longer possible, for the revolution had delayed the regular running of the trains, and, besides, my children continued ill. During the whole of the 18th Granada suffered violent disturbances ; many honorable persons of the conservative party were taken to jail where they were put in chains, and there were not wanting those who came to tell me that the authorities had orders to apprehend me, which I did not credit in the least since there was no ground for such action against me, and because my position as Consul and my distance from the domestic political questions of Nicaragua, engaged as I was always in furthering the friendly ties of both countries, led me to believe with well-founded reason that I was beyond any suspicion whatsoever. I omit rehearsing, as it does not meet my purpose, the horrible scenes the city of Granada witnessed on that memorable day ; I will only state to you that those scenes were a shameful blot on Central American culture and a reproach to mankind.

On Sunday, the 19th of the said month of September, in the morning, I sent a request for an interview to the Governor of

Granada, General Juan J. Bodán, making use for the purpose of Don Toribio Lacayo, who acted as intermediary.

My object was to request the principal authority of Granada to ask the Minister of Promotion for an express train in which to return to Managua on the following day, for the business of the consulate as well as of Dr. Argüello demanded my presence in that city. Señor Lacayo, entrusted with the request for the interview, informed me that the Governor could not receive me that day as he had a multiplicity of very urgent matters to despatch.

In view of this difficulty, I determined to wait until things should calm down a little, because at that time I could not communicate with the capital by either telegraph or telephone, both lines being devoted exclusively to the Government service.

Furthermore, on the 19th, news reached me that orders had been given for my detention ; and there was no lack of persons who advised me to hide, reasoning that the ill-will entertained for me by the Government of that State might prove fatal to me, and that General Zelaya might improve the occasion to bring the whole weight of his wrath down upon me as the Representative of this Government, thus to punish the energetic stand I had maintained on the several occasions when it was sought to attack my country.

Naturally, I rejected the idea of concealing myself, and that day—the 19th—I spent in attendance on my children, who still continued ill, up to seven o'clock in the evening, when I went to the house of Dr. Alberto Lacayo for the purpose of begging him to come and see my sick children.

Five minutes had barely elapsed from my entrance into the Doctor's house when a squad appeared before the street door requesting permission to enter for the purpose, as they stated, of pursuing a *boy* who had come in a short time before. The owner of the house, my aunt, Doña Joesfa Argüello de Lacayo, informed the commander of the squad that no boy had come in, and that the only person who had arrived a moment before, and who was inside, was I. The commander of the squad then asked to see Dr. Lacayo, who was immediately called. The officer informed this gentleman that he came for the pur-

pose of arresting me, and he asked to be conducted to the room where I had remained, and almost immediately I saw Dr. Lacayo enter the room where I was conversing with two ladies, accompanied by Don José Dolores Cuadra, Chief of Police of Granada, and ten or twelve policemen armed with rifles.

Señor Cuadra asked me my name, which I immediately gave him. He then informed me that he had superior orders to arrest and conduct me to the jail. I protested against such an outrage, mentioning to the Chief of Police that he was laboring under a misapprehension, for it was impossible to conceive that he had been given orders to arrest me, I being, as I then was, Consul General of Costa Rica in Nicaragua.

I asked him if he had any written order, issued by a judge, for some offense I was charged with having committed, and the Chief of Police replied that he was not the bearer of any written order; but that he had superior instructions to take me to the jail, even by force, in case I objected to following him, and that he thought there was no mistake, as he had been told *that it was the Consul of Costa Rica he must arrest*, and that if I had any complaint to make, I could make it some other time, for I must follow him immediately.

In view of this attitude, and fearing, from what I had seen in other cases, some material outrage to my person if I made any resistance to brute force, I determined to follow the commander of the squad, who took me to the public jail, which is there called *El Cabildo* (town hall). I immediately asked to see the commandant, Señor Juan J. Bodán; but I was told that he was engaged and it was impossible to speak to him.

The Chief of Police delivered me over to the officer of the guard at the jail, who made a scrupulous search of my person, taking from my pockets everything they contained, including some important papers belonging to the consulate—papers I had received on my departure from Managua, and which, the same as the other articles taken from me, have never been returned.

The officer of the guard took me into the building and showed me a small space at the end of a bench where many other prisoners were seated; he put two sentinels over me and

gave them peremptory orders not to allow me to speak with any one nor to move from that place, authorizing them to open fire on me in case I disobeyed orders. About 9 o'clock at night I begged them to give me a glass of water. Permission was sought to provide it; but the officer of the guard replied that there were strict orders to give me nothing.

On the following day, September 20th, permission was granted for food to be sent in to me, and I was allowed to take water. But as it was necessary to torment me in some way, I was placed in a corridor where the sun entered from 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and despite the repeated solicitations of some friends who saw my sufferings to have me taken from that place of torment, the answer was always that the orders received regarding my person were very strict and that it was obligatory to obey them. Happily, after some hours of suffering from the pitiless intensity of the burning sun-rays, there appeared at the jail an individual whom I scarcely knew, but who became indignant on seeing the cruelty perpetrated on me, and he immediately ordered the guards to transfer me to another part of the corridor where I was in the shade.

I remained in the same corridor in which I was put on entering the jail until the 22nd. On that day, at nine in the morning, I was taken before a man named Manuel R. Castillo, whom I was told was the Judge Advocate, charged with conducting the proceedings in the matter of the revolution.

This Judge Advocate, after asking me my name, age and profession, interrogated me as to whether I was acquainted with the cause for my detention. I replied that I presumed the cause was a libelous statement made by the semi-official paper called *El Comercio*, which alleged that I was a revolutionary agent of the Government of Costa Rica in Nicaragua. I was also called upon to state everything that I had done and the names of persons I had conversed with since the 16th in the morning. I answered everything, not deviating a hair's breadth from the truth. I endeavored to make some other explanations respecting my actions, which the said paper, *El Comercio*, considered suspicious, and also desired to cite the names of some honorable parties who would have served as witnesses to my statements;

but the Judge Advocate prevented me in a peremptory manner, refusing to make record of anything other than the answers I had made to his questions up to that time, and ordering the clerk to immediately close the deposition, which I signed as soon as it was read to me.

From that moment I was placed in a cell, in solitary confinement, and the watchfulness was redoubled, for in place of two guards who had me in charge up to that time, six soldiers, rifle in hand, were stationed in front of the door of my lock-up.

In the afternoon of the same day—the 22nd—the official who had liberated me from the sun by sending me to another place, appeared and informed me that he had orders to hand-cuff me. At the same time he said that it was impossible to obey the order that night because the only pair of hand-cuffs not in use lacked some iron bolts which would not be ready until the next day.

I succeeded in obtaining ink and paper and I wrote a letter to President Zelaya, formulating a protest against my imprisonment, vexations and the irregular manner in which I was being dealt with. I also made some explanations with respect to the baseless charges laid against me in *El Comercio*, and I ended by asking President Zelaya to allow me a hearing and have justice done me.

To this letter, which was delivered into Señor Zelaya's own hands, no reply was ever made; and on one occasion when my esteemed friend, Don Antonio Bayán, asked him if he had received my letter, the President answered with the greatest scorn *that he had in fact received a letter from me, but that it was very long, and hence he had not read it.*

On September 24th, at seven in the morning, I was taken from my cell and, accompanied by thirty-two prisoners, I was transferred to the city of Managua.

In both cities we were made to march through the streets on foot.

On reaching the capital my companions were taken to the penitentiary, I alone remaining in the artillery barracks, where I was taken and turned over by an aid to the President of that State.

I judge that the private orders of which the aid who brought me was the bearer must have been very strict, for on reaching the barracks I had to wait a time while the two small windows of a narrow cell where I was to be confined were nailed up. That cell got very little air and light through a narrow door facing a corridor where, at a distance of scarcely five meters and pointing towards my door, was a Krupp gun, 7½ calibre, guarded day and night by two artillerymen, who kept it trained on me. Notwithstanding this, two guards were posted at the sides of the door of my cell, with orders to not allow communication with any one.

My health had been quite broken down by reason of the discomforts and ill-treatment to which I had been subjected, so that from that day I was prostrated in bed until the 13th of October.

During these seventeen days, in which I was attacked by a serious congestion of the liver, I was attended by the excellent physician Don Ernesto Rothschiuh, who came two or three times a day to see me.

The bad conditions of the cell, the want of air and light, and above all the irregularity in taking the little food that sustained me; the lack of water, many times, and the impossibility of providing myself at the proper time with the medicines prescribed for me, made my cure very difficult, and the moment arrived in which Dr. Rothschiuh became solicitous as to the outcome of my disease.

The commandant of the barracks who on one occasion found me very ill, went to President Zelaya and begged him to grant my release so that I might be taken to my house.

The President replied that he would send some physicians to report upon the state of my health.

So, on the following day, and while Dr. Rothschiuh was with me, Drs. Maldonado, Espinosa and Ortega appeared, two of whom, after an exhaustive examination gave a favorable, and the last named an adverse, report.

It ought to be at once understood that the report of Dr. Rothschiuh, advising with greater insistence than the others my immediate release, also reached the President's hands.

Naturally, General Zelaya only paid attention to the adverse report of Dr. Ortega, because this harmonized with his ill-will towards me.

Since my depositions were not taken, and it seemed that they no longer remembered that I was suffering in a cell, I determined, on October 18th in the morning, to send for Don Antonio M. Bayán, Consul of the Argentine Republic and Manager of the London Bank in Nicaragua.

Señor Bayán succeeded in seeing me during the afternoon of the 18th, and he found me so ill that he promised to exert all his influence with General Zelaya to the end of accomplishing my release from so grievous a position.

The efforts of my excellent friend, Señor Bayán, met with the greatest success, for on the following day—October 19th—at 10 A. M. he arrived accompanied by an aid of the President to take me to the Palace where a minute of release for ten days was signed.

Besides, it was an expressed condition imposed by General Zelaya on my surety, Señor Bayán, that I should remain under lock in a room in the building of the London Bank, without seeing any one but my wife and children, Señor Bayán binding himself to prevent my writing to any person whatsoever.

My surety agreed to everything, realizing the urgent necessity that existed for me to leave the barracks; and I in fact left to install myself in the Bank building. I had hardly reached my new prison when I fell into bed and kept it for eight days.

The eve of the expiration of the term of ten days—the date when I must needs return to the cell—some persons interested themselves with two of the members of the Diet—Dr. Castellanos and Sr. Soriano—that they, in turn, might secure from President Zelaya permission for me to be left in the Bank building. The efforts of these gentlemen were successful, and Señor Zelaya assured them that while no other complication with Costa Rica or the political exiles arose, he offered not to return me to prison; but that he would not be responsible for what would happen to me upon an invasion or declaration of war by the Government of Costa Rica.

Thus passed fifty days during which I recovered my health

completely ; but the time arrived when it became necessary for the Government to decide what to do with me, as Señor A. M. Bayán, Manager of the London Bank, in whose house I was located, must make a trip to El Salvador. Because of this my surety went to see President Zelaya, and begged him to let me leave the country with my family.

Señor Zelaya replied to this as follows : "Consul Béeche will not get out of my hands until President Iglesias concentrates all the political exiles and gives me absolute guarantees of peace." Nevertheless, Señor Bayán succeeded in arranging that from that day—December 8, 1897—I could return to my house, remaining with the city as my prison. The emphatic declaration made by Zelaya, showing his purpose to retain me as a hostage, was an imminent and terrible threat which afforded me not one instant of tranquillity. On the other hand, the words of the President made it apparent that I was not being tried according to the laws of the country, and that everything that had befallen me was the work of perversity and passion.

All this caused me to reflect very seriously regarding the risk I ran being held as a hostage in the power of an arbitrary ruler, who, having felt not the slightest compunction in jailing and harassing the consul of a friendly nation, much less would he hesitate to inflict upon me, despoiled as I was of that office, all manner of cruelties just as soon as the invasion of the political exiles is announced, or in case Costa Rica should declare war on him to put an end to his unjustifiable aggressions against us

I stayed, then, fifteen days at the capital with the city as a prison, and considering that I was not summoned to appear before any court whatever, and no defense was allowed, neither was I interrogated with regard to the acts attributed to me ; and realizing from the words of President Zelaya himself that I was only held as a hostage, I determined on the night of December 22, to take the road to Costa Rica, to present myself before the Government and report upon the occurrences, which I now have the honor to do.

From the 22nd of last December up to the 3rd day of January, the date on which I succeeded in gaining the frontier, I exper-

ienced innumerable troubles and privations, which it is not pertinent to relate.

At Pueblo Nuevo, near Rivas, and at Sapoá, I was on the point of falling into the hands of the forces of the Government of General Zelaya, who, according to information, had orders little humane respecting my person.

Happily I was able to escape, and on the 8th ultimo I reached this capital.

Once in this city I have had occasion to inform myself of the communications exchanged between the Government of this country and the Diet of the Greater Republic of Central America; and with true pleasure I have seen that a formal protest has been filed for the unqualifiable outrage committed on the person of the Consul General of Costa Rica, and that a demand has been made on the Government of Nicaragua for reparation to the country, and an indemnity for me, which accords with justice,

I entertain the hope that the steps taken will be pushed, and that very soon the results will be in every way successful.

I have also seen by the editorial in *La Gaceta Oficial*, of December 19th of last year, that the Government of Costa Rica has given its full approval to my action, which is very satisfactory to me.

I ought to mention in this report the excellent behavior of my colleagues, the members of the consular corps in Managua, who so soon as they learned that I had been in prison, appeared before the Diet, asking that I be treated better and offering me the house of any one of them that I might be transferred there, thus avoiding the vexation of remaining in a jail.

As you may see by the enclosed copy, the Diet, on laying that request before the Government of Nicaragua, adhered to the statements of the consuls, and also espoused the petition.

Unfortunately, so friendly and opportune an intervention did not bear the hoped-for results, for President Zelaya refused everything, and, notwithstanding having solemnly promised that orders would be issued that I be treated with the consideration to which I was entitled by reason of my social position, on that very day the precautions taken to keep a watch over

me were redoubled, and orders were given to put a pair of handcuffs on me.

These are the facts which led to my imprisonment, and which I had the honor to verbally report to you upon my arrival.

I guarantee their truthfulness and am ready to prove them.

Mr. Minister, be pleased to accept the renewed assurances of consideration with which I sign myself,

Your humble servant,

(Signed) EDUARDO BÉCHE.

To DON RICARDO PACHECO,
Minister of Foreign Relations.

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